

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 01099 041056Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 PM-05 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02

EUR-12 /091 W

-----093247 050610Z /13

R 041000Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 969

INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS COTONOU 1099

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PEPR, GB, DM

SUBJ: GABONESE EXPULSION OF BENINESE

REF: COTONOU 1091

SUMMARY: ON AUGUST 3 BENINESE AUTHORITIES BEGAN RELEASING THE FIRST
REPARTIATES TO THEIR FAMILIES AMID REPORTS OF LOOTING AND RAPING
ON THE PART OF GABONESE POLICE OSTENSIBLY PROTECTING
BENINESE DETAINED AT LIBREVILLE AIRPORT. BENINESE GOVERNMENT
MEANWHILE BITTERLY ATTACKED PRESIDENT BONGO FOR THE LACK OF
PROTECTION GIVEN TO BENINESE IN GABON AND TERMED HIS DECISION
TO ALLOW PROFESSIONALS TO REMAIN IN GABON AS "DISCRIMINATION
BASED ON EXPLOITATION." END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 COTONO 01099 041056Z

1. FIRST BATCH OF EXPATRIATES WERE BEING RELEASED TO THEIR
FAMILIES ON AUGUST 3 AFTER HAVING SPENT TWO DAYS, SOME IN AN
OPEN AIR STADIUM AND APPARENTLY WITHOUT FOOD, UNDERGOING SCREENING
BY BENINESE AUTHORITIES. SOME OF THE FIRST ARRIVALS IN COTONOU
HAVE CONFIRMED CHARGES MADE IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER
EHUZU, THAT GABONESE POLICE ENGAGED IN LOOTING, PILLAGE, AND
RAPE AGAINST BENINESE NATIONALS. HOWEVER, IT IS UNCERTAIN AT

PRESENT IF INCIDENTS WERE WIDESPREAD OR LIMITED IN NATURE.

2. BENINESE GOVERNMENT BROKE A THREE-DAY OFFICIAL SILENCE ON THE REPATRIATION TODAY BY PRINTING THE FULL TEXT OF BONGO'S TELEGRAM REQUESTING LANDING RIGHTS FOR PLANES CARRYING REPATRIATES. HAVING NOTED THAT BENIN IS READY AT ALL TIMES TO RECEIVE ITS NATIONALS, THE GOVERNMENT PROCEEDED TO RIDICULE THE GABONESE PRESIDENT'S CLAIMS TO HAVE ACTED WITH HUMANITY TOWARDS BENINESE NATIONALS. THE STATEMENT ACCUSED HIM OF HAVING PERSONALLY ORDERED THE PILLAGE OF BENINESE PROPERTY, AND CHARACTERIZED AS THE HEIGHT OF HYPOCRISY THE DECISION TO REPATRIATE BUSINESSMEN, WHOSE PROPERTY COULD BE CONFISCATED, WHILE ALLOWING THOSE WITH PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TO STAY ON.

3. THE BENINESE CONTINUE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE GABONESE PEOPLE AND PRESIDENT BONGO HIMSELF WHOM THEY HOLD "RESPONSIBLE BEFORE HISTORY FOR CRIMINAL, INHUMANE, AND ANTI-AFRICAN ACTS." PARKILL

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